



*Loving the Love Thing*

*Tom Yeshe*



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*For Portico, with endless thanks to all true Gurus, the embodiments of Love*

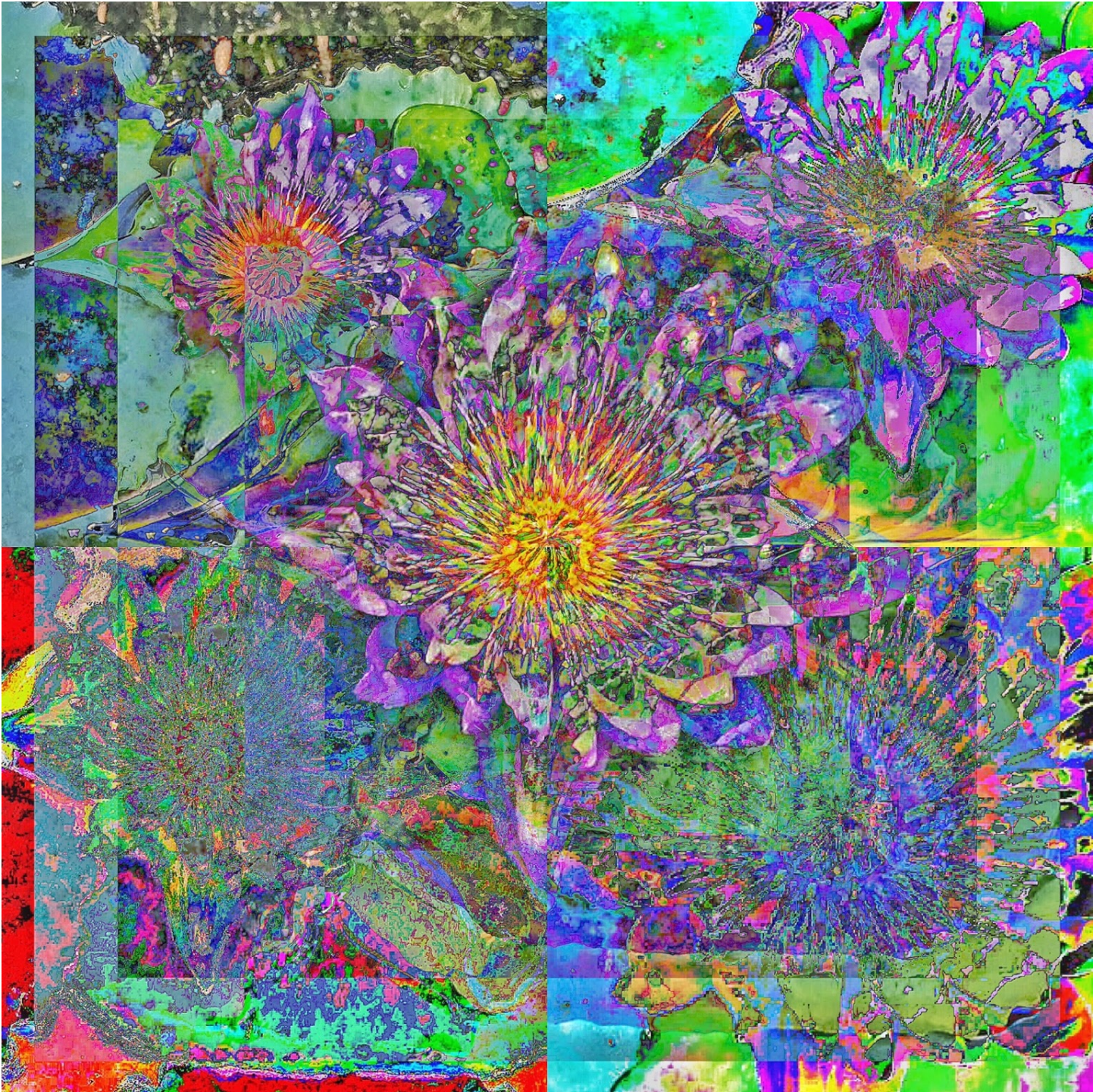
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## Foreword

From my initial bedazzled infatuation with the miracle-manifesting wisdom of the East and eager transactions with its purveyors, to angry, despondent disillusionment then on to my arrival, after decades of spiritual practice and earnest re-evaluation, at a place of peaceful gratitude for the good of the Gurus, the good that with humble wonder we may call God, I reproduce here selections from accounts over the years of my evolving, healing attitude toward these divine yet human messengers, teachers and exemplars. In these pages are the essential landmarks and vistas of my peculiar path. From the trackless swamps through which I slogged, seething, thinking of Gurus as grrr-ooze, I ascended at times to bright-aired heights from which I saw those very bogs and bayous to be the source of life-giving streams and cloud-seeding mists that refracted sunlight into celebratory rainbows. These moments of appreciation have increased in frequency and duration and have expanded to include quotidian things so that they no longer seem quotidian at all, which makes quotidian an apt word to describe such things and eventually everything — quotidian, after all, being an unusual word for everyday, ordinary — and the ordinary everyday anything and everything is simply a marvel, the Something that somehow exists, with all of us and all things inseparable parts of that Whole. And that is wholly Love.

Tom Yeshe  
San Diego, California  
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## Chapter 1 The Love Thing: Knowing Bliss

I recounted my most significant early experiences of witness consciousness in the document “Time Alone Passing” that I circulated among friends in 1991, several months after leaving the ashram with which I’d been closely involved for ten years. Besides telling of spiritual awakening, I revealed what I learned, over the course of nearly two decades, about what philosopher Ken Wilber calls guru theater — the scenes of distressing and confusing events that sometimes occur when a guru has dictatorial power over the details of disciples’ lives. Seeker beware. But in the West — culturally far removed from their ancient Asian roots — gurus, lamas and roshis have done much to promote the spiritual growth of their students, despite the damaging, and certainly counter-productive, abuses of authority. Whether directly pointing out the nature of awareness or providing practices, teachings and settings that support and guide aspirants in their unfolding, the Eastern teachers have, on balance, helped much more than they’ve hurt. On the whole, they’ve been a great blessing in this world.

The paragraph above introduced Time Alone Passing to readers in 2002; the rest of this chapter comprises lightly edited excerpts from that work. This knowing, however fleeting, became the becoming that flowers as Being Bliss.

### Meditation and Death

My interest in meditation comes from my childhood terror of death. At first I dreaded losing my parents; soon I feared my own death. I wondered what death would be like. I tried to imagine a total blacking out, a complete cessation of awareness. Yet in my closest approximation to an imaginary death I retained a sense of self; I was still there observing and reporting on my own demise. What is this self, I wondered, this stable witness of an evanescent world?

True death, I reasoned, would obliterate every vestige of me, as when in deep sleep. (The similarity of death to sleep prompted me to examine the process of falling asleep; one night I had the sensation of my awareness descending from my head to my throat region, indeed falling.) I wouldn’t really be there at all, so why be afraid? But that was the point: I didn’t want to not be. I was terrified of altogether vanishing.

I entered high school an agnostic, looking to science through the eyes of science fiction for the key to immortality, dreaming that a scientific breakthrough would someday give us replacements for our bodily parts, including our brains. In fantasy I saw myself as being essentially present (thoughts, feelings and memories intact) in a body entirely

artificial. Given this possibility, I could occupy two such bodies, I thought. But how I could retain my identity while leading two lives I couldn't imagine.

Pondering the nature of my innermost self, which I assumed was my mental process, I searched for the origin of that process, the source of thought. One night as I lay in bed I concentrated intently, thinking about thinking, trying with all my might to track thought to its lair. The thought arose that this is futile, thought in search of itself. In the next instant there was a brilliant flash of light and an equally astounding lack of thought, both flash and lack having been "in my head" according to the resumed thought of the following moment. I and my thinking at one once again, I noted my body: taut, shaking, fists clenched.

In college, reading Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* inspired me to learn meditation. The book convinced me that there was an ancient, proven technology for the exploration of inner space and the quickening of the soul's evolution. The spirit behind the words had touched my soul, evidently, for in terms such as spirit and soul Yogananda lavishly described the euphoria of religious experience that I myself had begun to feel while reading his account. God was quite believable and I eagerly accepted the invitation to unite with Him via the "scientific" method of meditation. Merging with God seemed almost too much to hope for, but it also seemed like the only worthwhile thing to do.

In meditation I dissociated briefly from the chatter of my mind, which indicated that I was not my mind, but I (or my mind) was not convinced that I was a deathless soul fundamentally free of matter. As my meditations intensified, my doubts about the spiritual nature of ultimate reality increased.

I entertained the frightful hypothesis that I was the creation of a God who ran the universe simply to torture me, giving me false hope of liberation, even blissful tastes of a seemingly, at least hopefully, eternal salvation, only to make the poison of the truth more bitter as my hope, like a crystal chalice full of the elixir of meditation, dashed on the rocks of a demonic, material reality.

The quiet space of meditation took on an ominous feeling. As my mind stilled, the remaining sense of "I" seemed tiny in a vast inner space filled with a presence that this "I" felt threatened by, a conscious presence "I" knew must be God. Apparently "I" would have to disappear in order to merge with God. I was terrified; I felt that I was meeting death. In the culmination of this process I had the distinct impression that God was looking with a giant eye in the upper back of my head right through me at everything I saw both externally with my physical eyes and internally with my own

mind's eye. With an inner plea of complete desperation I yielded to God my vain effort to attain Him. In that moment of release, utterly humbled, my consciousness and God's presence in me were the same, and clearly always had been. I was in bliss; I was bliss itself. So ended my fear of death, and began a bout of spiritual pride. Though I told no one, I presumed to be enlightened.

I started thinking about going to Hawaii.

### Sky of Nectar

I went to Hawaii for the first time about a month later, in January of 1974. Offering my services as a teacher of meditation, I posted an ad that drew the attention of some students of Guru Maharaji, the chubby young "Perfect Master" of the Divine Light Mission. In May I learned his meditation techniques.

The four techniques, together called Knowledge, were divulged in a closed Knowledge Session to which one typically gained entrance only after showing the Guru's representative authority, an initiating and intimidating Mahatma, that one was prepared to "surrender" to Maharaji, surrender being necessary to permit the influx of "guru's grace" without which the supposedly secret techniques would supposedly not work. Evidence of surrender was regular attendance at followers' meetings, voluntary performance of work for the organization and finally, declaring before the group and the Mahatma one's acceptance of Maharaji as God incarnate, the true Guru, concluding with a full-length prostration before his picture.

I had gone to few meetings; I had done no work. But when I formally asked the Mahatma for Knowledge and in response to his query truthfully denied that Paramahansa Yogananda was my guru, he said, "Who am I to stand between you and the Lord?" He motioned to the picture of Maharaji. I lay prone, stretching out my arms in a posture of submission, thinking, "I'm bowing to my true Self of which Guru Maharaji is a token."

His devotees were called premies (rhymes with "gem seas"; Hindi for divine lovers). They were friendly. The premies, my curiosity about the techniques of Knowledge, and a dream had attracted me to Maharaji. In my dream I saw him become empty space, which reminded me of my encounter with God in meditation. I took it as a sign that I should ask for Knowledge. I had already made plans to see Maharaji in Massachusetts in July, simply to meet an enlightened being other than myself. The dream gave me a rationale for playing the follower; certainly I could show devotion to a symbol of empty

space, of the God-state that I had realized. By becoming a premie I would also be closer to my new friends and hundreds of potential friends, all premies. And I would learn the mysterious nectar technique.

Nectar was the only one of the four techniques of Knowledge that really baffled me, given my research and what I could elicit from the premies. I guessed, correctly as it turned out, that the light, music and word techniques were basically the same as methods taught via mail by Yogananda's Self-Realization Fellowship and were, as I learned later, published in several books.

Children press their eyes and see subjective lights that scientists call phosphenes. This is a hallowed ancient yogic practice. So, too, is shutting the ears with one's thumbs and listening to inner ringing or other sounds a beloved pastime of kids and yogis alike. Premies call it music, to Yogananda it was Om, the universal syllable that permeates creation, not to be confused with the premies' word. The most elusive technique of the four, the word is the sense of life itself, often approached by means of the breath: feeling the breath, listening to it or silently repeating "so" with the in breath and "hum" with the out.

The last method revealed in the Knowledge Session was nectar. The Mahatma instructed us to try to touch our uvulas with the tips of our tongues. He inspected our efforts, mouths agape like a nest of hungry chicks awaiting a feeding from Mom. I curled my tongue back, straining. "Good!" he said. I felt nourished, relieved. The session ended, the door opened, and out flew a flock of fledgling premies.

Glad to be out of the hot, crowded room, I walked down the stairs of the Divine Light Mission ashram at 29 Kawanānakoā Place, Honolulu. I opened a French screen door, stepped outside and turned to look at the beaming face of an individual who called himself, in accordance with a typographical error made somewhere in the Mission, Sky. Called Skip by his former schoolmates, Skipper by his Navy veteran father and proud Baptist mother who had prayed for the birth of this their only child — Harold — this very one, my new acquaintance, Sky, opened wide his mouth. Of his tongue only the underside of the root could be seen. The rest of it was pressed behind, above and beyond the uvula and the soft palette, gone somewhere up into the reaches of the nasopharynx, swallowed by his brain for all I could tell. Sky was doing nectar.

I left Hawaii the next day to see Maharaji in Amherst, then spent some time at home in Kansas City en route to a year's stay in the Encinitas, California, environs of my prized enlightenment. There I befriended hatha yoga teacher David Williams and sundry affiliates of the Hare Krishna movement.

Two years after the Knowledge Session I was living in the room where it had been held. No longer an ashram, the house was home to premies, Sky among them, seeking to balance meditation with sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. I thought that he had found the magic point of equilibrium. Sky, whose hidden-tongue trick I had tried hard to do until I could, I now regarded as my guru. I was encouraged by his being many things that I was not: musical, spontaneous, never without a girlfriend or good grass or a quip or word of good cheer. Benefits from my association with Sky and my outright attempt to imitate him endure. After hanging out with him for a few months, however, I discerned his mere mortality. When I left for K.C. in October, 1976, I felt much more his brother than his disciple.

### Goodbye Gurus

In the course of a couple of years, I fell under and rose above the spell of the notorious Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (several years before his debacle in the United States). After a few of his kind had duped me I knew that I wasn't enlightened. (Duping does require a duo, one half of which subdivides into the familiar trio of me, myself and I.) Nevertheless, I believed that there were honestly holy persons to be found; I detected one in the person of Swami "Baba" Muktananda.

Baba expounded a subtle Kashmiri philosophy that titillated my intellect. I loved chanting with his devotees, whose testimonials were powerful. I wanted to believe it all, and lo and behold: I did. For ten years, with an occasional doubt, I kept the faith. I worshiped Baba and then his successors — Gurumayi (once called Malti) and her brother — as pure vessels of the spirit, virtual forms of God.

The revelation of the "celibate" brother's liaisons forced his retirement and reawakened the doubts I'd had when I read an expose of Baba's philandering in the Winter 1983 number of "Co-Evolution Quarterly" (now "The Whole Earth Review"). Gurus surround themselves with self-serving scriptures, most of which tout their purity and perfect detachment. But sooner or later they cite texts to explain unusual behavior. The gist is: being beyond the constraints of mortals and morals, a guru may sometimes act as demons do; but however demonic a guru's actions may seem, they are in fact beneficial to any and all parties who may be involved. Gurumayi knew that her brother was screwing around. Yet people came up to him and bowed low in obeisance, right under her nose. She kept his love life secret; it was not held up as an example of the devilish play with which gurus sometimes bless their disciples. After finally ousting him, she quietly disapproved of the sex and said that she had tolerated his being a guru



for so long to save the honor of the lineage and the guru's throne. She excused her delay in doing what she thought was right — ejecting her brother from guruhood — saying that it couldn't be done hastily lest she and her cult be disgraced. In the event, getting rid of him was a painful struggle that dragged on for months: so much for gurus' omnipotence. At last, he left. Upon getting word from the victorious Gurumayi, thousands of his now former devotees took his pictures off of walls and altars, cut them out of books and magazines, and burned them. At her command, the organization erased his name (Swami "Gurudev" Nityananda).

That incident shook me. Her handling of the affair showed weakness and hypocrisy. But, liking the people, the food and the low rent at Gurumayi's gorgeous Honolulu ashram, I stayed on. A summer as house captain of the ashram gave me a direct view of cult politics. I didn't like the petty power plays and neurotic infighting. Still a devotee, I moved to the Big Island in September, 1990. Soon, I read an article in Yoga Journal about the secret misadventures of Swami Rama, whom I had long admired as an exemplary guru. His image fell from its esteemed place in my mental gallery of saints, a rumble went through the fissured old foundation of my belief, and it all came crashing down. My illusions about the sanctity of gurus and their cults lay shattered.

## Questions and Answers

Do you still meditate?

Yes. My mantra has gone from Om Namah Shivaya to Om Guru to Om. Listening to ringing in my ears or birds and crickets singing is effective. I still sit and feel my spine, letting it move, doing nabho or khechari mudra (the tongue tip touching the uvula or up in the nasopharynx), with gyan (sometimes spelled jnan, also called chin) mudra (thumbs touching index fingers). I concentrate on my finger and tongue tips, feeling my breathing, relaxing, feeling my whole body and then, perhaps, no body at all.

It sounds as though you practice Guru Maharaji's Knowledge. Do you do the light technique?

Meditation techniques the world over share a common basis: the human body. There are many variations, but sound, sight and feeling are elements of prime importance. I neither stop my ears nor press my eyes. I do see a pleasant blue shimmering when, eyes closed, I concentrate on my visual field.

I take it that you like to meditate. Do people, liking meditation, fall for gurus because they teach meditation?

I like to meditate. More than meditation, and more subtly, gurus teach guru-worship. People fall for gurus for the same reasons that they adore movie stars and sports figures. The latter two varieties of cultural heroes don't explicitly claim to save souls, however. The relationship of devotee and guru is more closely mirrored by that of client and psychotherapist. A therapist who has any inkling of Freud's most important discoveries sees his or her interactions with clients in the revealing light of the concept of transference. The typical follower has a strong transference to the guru. Read the final sections, if not the entirety, of Ernest Becker's book *The Denial of Death* for an illuminating discussion of transference. For the basics look in C.G. Jung's *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice*.

Existence seems so unlikely, utterly improbable compared to the simplicity of eternal nothingness, plain old nothing, nothing at all. Does the question "Who am I?" have any relevance to anything?

If we look to our perceptions in subjective awareness, wherein we also constitute these words and thoughts (although the process of so constituting them is outside our conscious awareness) we see in the ever-changing mind the same creation and destruction that occurs in the universe at large. The universal and the individual are not identical. Yet the individual is no more or less likely to exist than the totality of existence itself.

"It is as likely to be born twice as to be born once or a million, zillion times," one of the once-born concluded after introspectively looking for who, in his case, had been born. You, he, she, they die, and all life, dying, goes on. But the "I" of myself came to "me" in a conscious thought after, by some years, I first spoke the word "I" and that was some time after I as a body was born. In infancy, in reverie, dream, fantasy, daydream, surprise, orgasm, deep sleep, in senile decline towards death and in death itself "Who am I?" is an errant question. One does not require a driver's license, a social security number, a passport or a birth certificate in order to die. The pertinent question is not posed by the grammatical sentence "Who am I?" but entails scrutiny of the meaning to oneself of the first person singular pronoun as a fundamental pointer to selfhood: "What is I?"

A direct, frontal, introspective assault on one's I may yield a cataclysmic silencing of its monosyllabic sounding, and associated rumblings, in one's mind. The effective assault (assault is an apt term, for it is a forceful approach to a well-defended realm) will sweep before it doubts concerning the nature of "oneself," "mind," as well as "I" which in all likelihood will not be the last to go, the last to be heard, the last thought. But go it will, and all the other words too, retreating to who knows where. Who, where, know: they will all go, as will I....

The I comes back of course. After many approaches to it, not all so direct, the search and attack comes to truce, treaty, and eventually, tryst. Life lives on, "I" changes, yet its fading into oblivion is always the same silence. Death is certain: a one out of one probability; one for all and all for one.

There is so much suffering in the world: cruelty, injustice, disease, war, poverty, starvation. Could you speak a little on the problem of pain?

Ouch! We might as well ask, Is life worth living? The belief that it is helps make it so, according to William James. Regarding euthanasia, Robert Misbin observes that a physician's primary duties are to save lives and relieve suffering but often he cannot do both. In any event, suffering and death are inevitable aspects of life. As we practice compassion for suffering beings, recognizing that everyone suffers to some extent and so all are deserving of our kindness, our kinship with all life, our one-of-a-kind-ness, becomes more and more apparent, increasingly showing itself to be blissful love incarnate everywhere in and as everyone and everything. Our hearts open wider and others' suffering touches us more easily, but paradoxically our appropriate response rests in a depth of joyous equanimity that easily absorbs the turbulence of life's drama, which we see as just that: an amazing play, ultimately delightful.

I try to meditate but I can't relax. What can I do?

Try glossolalia: speaking pseudolanguage, the speaking in tongues of Christian charismatics. Start by repeating a syllable or two or three; lalala... or banana, banana,... will work. Enjoy the mindlessness of that for a while, then let anything flow out. Experiment; express different feelings in your new language, with corresponding tones, cadences and gestures. Try it silently, like a mantra, with just your inner voice.

Stretching, shaking, yawning, singing and dancing will help you relax. If you need stronger unwinding, get well out of earshot and away from anything hard or sharp,

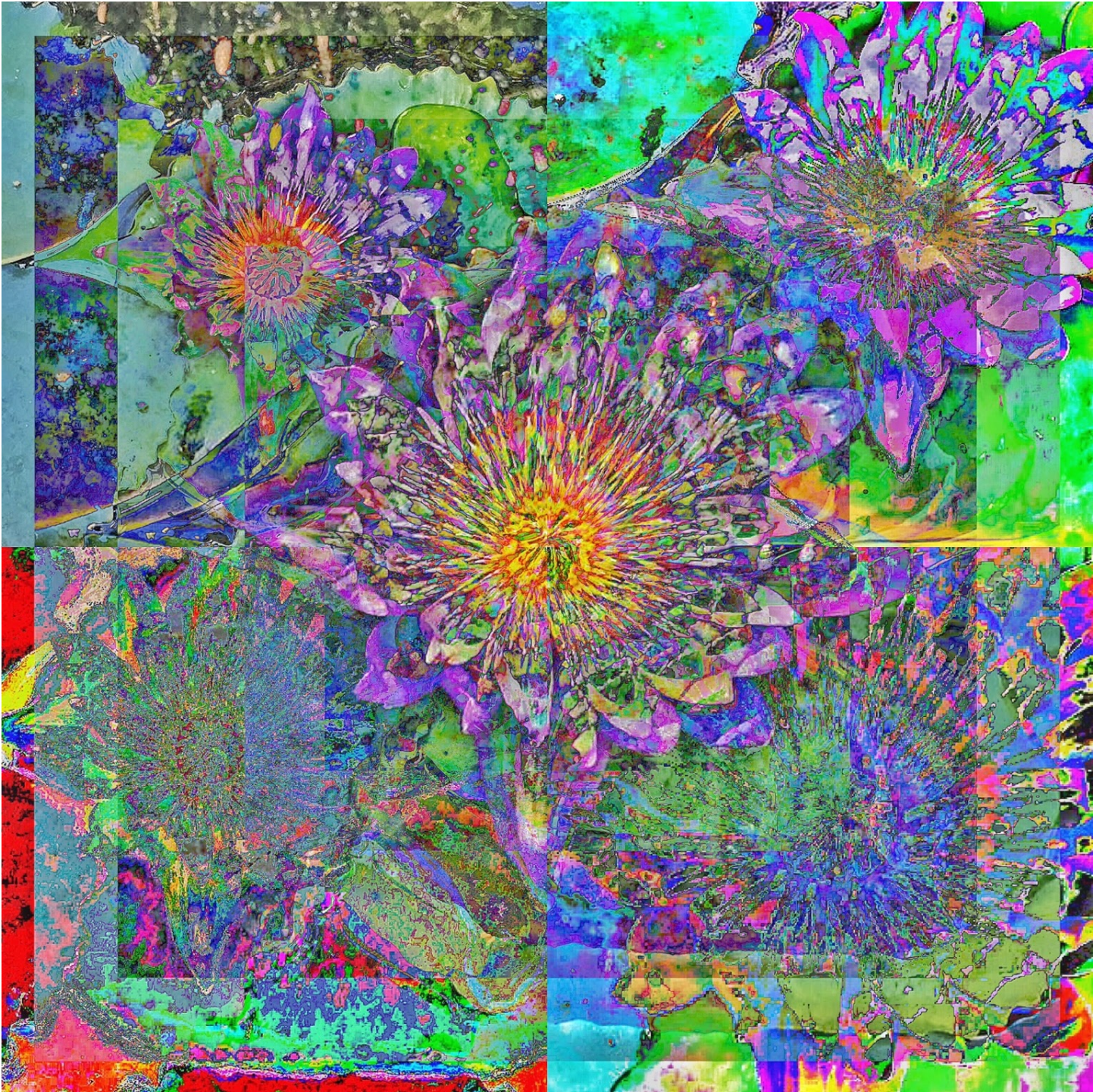


hyperventilate for ten or fifteen minutes, then let the pseudolanguage totally loose. Bring along a courageous spirit: your own self, or someone who won't recoil from spastic contortions and a frothing mouth.

Is life real or is it a dream?

Someone once answered that question by saying that life becomes real when you know it's a dream. Life is. Let yourself think it's real and it becomes a dream, and vice versa.







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## Chapter 2 Being Bliss: Loving the Love Thing

Yoga. Sitting, breathing with ujjayi pranayama sounding through my nasal pharynx, throat and eustachian tubes, doing it with “nectar” (khechari mudra), feeling the ajna chakra connecting the area between my eyebrows with the base of my skull. Feeling my spine, relaxing, vibrating.

I reflect on the Hindu notion of karma, thinking of debt, retribution, guilt, social networks, eschatologies, euthanasia, and the “free play of meaning” as relating to Kashmiri concepts of the alphabetic and linguistic matrix of reality being Sanskrit, the essence of the language and its written form being one, and being one and the same as the minds that individually conceive thoughts which in themselves are nothing apart from matrika, the “little mothers” of all and everything, the Matrix, the ground of being; yet these concepts rigidify readily with caste and culture weighing heavily upon those who try to transmit the living heart of the teachings, which is just each one’s own breathing, pulsing embodiment.

Goddess, we are thee, helping us help ourselves. Need we grant that this is selfish? Yes! Everyone on board! All aboard! We’re all in this boat together. Row row row your boat gently down the stream, merrily merrily merrily merrily, life is boat a dream on the stream of reality; what difference or différance does it or do we make? Action, decision, karma, self self self self self self self self self self self. The beautiful abyss of what death means to me is solace and refuge from I, my selfing unthing (and Kohut’s selfobjects) and everything else.

Death, yes. And psychophysical deconstruction by glossolalia and singing and dancing.

Ontogenetically, in the womb, the human is a fetal fish for a time. The fish posture, matsyasana, in its lotus-legged variation, is ideally suited to floating in the ocean. I can even imagine my floating self to be a fish: a flounder, say.

Language inevitably describes itself, inhabiting those who write and speak it.

The ways, what are the ways to where? How do we look, questioning the mysterious, ultimately unanswerable life we are?



Yet the asking of “why?”, in making the dreadful leap through death in seeking its ground, may fulfill the quest by enlivening the body beyond its mortal constraints, thereby freeing the mind and life from obsessive essential questioning. Then historical, conceptual opacities of philosophy or any signification are no more problematic than musical polyrhythms, the love of dance, human touch and trance.

May we be as gods, forever frolicking with great humor and grace.

The strictures of passing through our birth canals, and our bodies’ subsequent cultural canalization, we deconstruct ecstatically via energizing means, ancient and modern. Life’s true newborn freedom bears its own light unmistakably, mercifully exposing the poverty and fearful circumscription of repressive moralisms and ideologies that in their crowd-theatrics may, nonetheless, grant an excited, egoless experience, as do some gurucentric cults that also promulgate legitimate, powerful techniques of personal/transpersonal transformation that an individual may utilize on his or her own, apart from the exploitive surround of the cult. The infantile inevitably seeks the parental, however; indeed, an infant requires parents to conceive it, a mother to bear it, and at least one parent to care for it in its early years. The guru-mother/father is as inevitable as the original parents, who form the basis and model for all such transferences.

Stay on the edge, beyond the human, as a human, among the unknowable, lovable humans magically breathing, here, in the middle of space in the utterly unlikely universe we are.

The sun is a star and a face and molten gold. Ever in transit, the aspects of meaning in our lives number into the imaginary.

Players, upon what do your game boards lie, what do they cover and hide? What is on their undersides and of what are they made?

If one feels the depth and extent of the pain that is concomitant with one’s individuality, I think that one is no longer apt to see anyone as being any better or worse off than anyone else.

Because the ego is concerned with perpetuating its existence, while all about one others have died and others continue to die, one naturally wonders from time to time, “Do I survive death?” Vividly convincing accounts of those who have survived near-death experiences and the glowing, ecstatic reports of transcendence by mystic saints do not necessarily quell one’s fears and doubts regarding life after death, perhaps because one suspects that the portion or aspect of the psyche that remains to observe

such ethereal phenomena will itself perish in the inevitable event of actual death. Such suspicions can persist and even increase in the aftermath of one's own transcendence of normal experiential bounds. Fear of death and its attendant doubt do seem to submerge, if not irreparably shatter, in the wake of one's ego-death, an episode in which the innermost I ceases to identify anything at all, no longer delivering reports of any observations of even the subtlest phenomena, which have altogether vanished without a trace, with no I remaining to in any way reflect upon this occurrence or self-reflect upon itself. With the post-episodic reappearance of the ego, self-concern once again arises but in a markedly changed psychic environment that will not readily admit of limitations such as mortality. This grandiose, inflated phase may persist for years, until the humbling hammer-blows of life, ringing on one's hollow, puffed-up idol of a self-image convulse it to the ground and awaken one from the dreamy worship of oneself as an immortal god trapped in a human form that is, as such an incarnation, special.

Pain warns one that something is presently wrong, or it indicates that awareness is moving into a part of the body which was numbed in response to an unavoidable painful stimulus. When awareness re-enters an area that has been numb it encounters what was there when it retreated: pain, from having desires thwarted or defenses breached, and the muscular tensions that, in the face of threatened or real violence, held back the reactions to the pain: crying, screaming, biting, hitting, scratching and kicking. As feeling returns to one's body, the energies of these repressed reactions escape from newly thawing muscles and awaken expressive emotional power.

Myths, legends, fairy tales and stories abound with symbols and dynamics that, with due regard and understanding, may alchemically transform the material of the psyche from a confusion of base elements to an immutably radiant jewel. Though sharing properties of light and heat, no two jewels are identical in cut, color and setting. Transmutation of the psyche is not a quest for a uniform truth, nor a thoroughgoing deconstructive mental meltdown; it's one's unique process of discovery and creation, that one comes to discover involves living one's life as a creating creature among the flora and fauna of nature and the humans who, characteristically blind and numb in various ways, traverse the landscape and psychic realms with bewildered abandon, offering ample opportunity for one to practice love and compassion.

on my lucky night high up

on a star in the so-called heavens

knows I dream to keep the dream alive

that is to say myself a dream dreaming

light behind the eyes

not shapes of things

just light

soft

gently absorbing

feelings sensed without images

obliterated accepted left alone

lightly as they come and go

saying Om

as the spine uncoils

straightening clicking

vertebrae in place

I cry Om and more

not knowing what I say

with tongue and throat

lips cheeks blowing

sounds ground in



the larynx gizzard  
of my bird  
brain. snake  
with wings fly  
into yourself turn  
inside out pull your  
tail through your tongue.  
both forks. thinking foreign  
noise static avalanche  
interrupts silence grunting  
belly floating heart blinking  
eye leaving light as it is  
no form sought no idea  
in mind staring at the light of  
nothing  
in many particular  
pains burning  
out the fear  
rounding shadows  
objectless call

Om

as recognizable

language agent

complex reasserts itself

I do declare

Om again from toe

tips to darkness in

the light snapping

my head or stretching

between my shoulder

blades. where did I

come from unknown

no one knows

and answers asking

itself flying away

snake uncoils. Om.

Joel L.[Life?] Whitton, M.D., Ph.D., in the third-person voice of Joe Fisher, presents a moral cosmotheology whose tenets may be articulated as follows:

We all live in a cosmic classroom that we leave temporarily by dying into our true, unbounded, infinitely wise realm of interlife metaconsciousness when and where we

plan our next existence, after having reviewed our last one with the “judgment board.” We need the intervals between birth and death, commonly called life, to shape the material of our characters in the suitably dense vibrations of Earth. In the interlife, we review and plan earthly sojourns in which we forget our interlife wisdom and the very interlife itself, which is so comforting in its manifest assurance of an immortality that stands in stark contrast to the death-fearing lives we lead on the ultimately unimportant earth-plane in which we perfect a character that has value only for earth life, our metaconsciousness already being perfect and in no need of improvement for the enjoyment of the interlife bliss that we get between lives anyway.

Sorry! No sale! But don’t put that book in the trunk or the incinerator; heck, put it by the supermarket cash register, right by the tabloid Weekly World News (HORSE BORN WITH HUMAN FACE). I think the Warner Books review board made a similar judgment and devised their marketing plan accordingly: a pulp paperback with a lurid, embossed cover. Judge a book, then cover it.

Yoga liberates: it frees us into less and less confining captivities. Let’s keep moving as it frees us, lest it freeze us in a confinement that seems to be the ultimate freedom, the final “state.”

In an imitation of Derrida’s deconstruction so blatant that none can doubt the sincerity of their flattery, a coterie calling itself The Watertank Think Tank has spawned a school of “thorough throughout-thought” (to borrow their rhetoric) that they give the name “undisentanglement.” The group appears to be an experiment in parody; witness, for instance, their latest paper: “Undisentanglement: Breakdown and Dyspepsia in Nietzsche’s Advanced Syphilitic Logic and in Gautama Buddha’s Parinirvanic Porcine Poisoning,” by Y. Knot.

Their abbreviation of the word undisentanglement, “ude,” pronounced “you’d,” figures prominently in the group’s work. Their keynote paper, “Ude Best Not,” discusses the two meanings of you’d, you would and you had, contrasting willing and having; as a link to a Frommian and (Rollo) Mayan analysis of being, willing and having, they take the auxiliary use of would, in which it expresses condition, futurity or habit, and drag it through various European forests of hard woulds, felling, in the process, some knaughty timber. Again, I use their rhetoric. A dialectic unfolds and enfolds in which two subjects’ views of one another’s purposiveness is uded, undisentangled, in the two senses of you’ll, you will and you shall, involving each other’s tacit, even unconscious, assumptions about the other’s intention: whether it is the futurity of will or the determination, obligation or necessity of shall.

All in all, these are waters too shall-ow to float, oh, a will-ow boat, oh. The tanks, as I call them, would have us believe that this introductory exercise of their method, brought to bear upon the internal monologues implicit in a two-party conversation with its back and forth, give and take, and ebb and flow, shows ude to be philosophically, psychologically and even socially (as entertainment?) relevant, useful to us, something that ude best not leave out in the cold but should welcome to a wide hearth as a bringer of warmth, light and joy, like a you'll-tide-logue.

Today, Sunday, a sunny day, I ate a mango Tawn got somewhere, and I sat and saw a mango tree waving parts of itself in different directions, its shell of leaves smoothly covering the crooked limbs, the patches of new leaves looking like continents beside the old, washed-out, dull green leaves of ocean on the world mango tree between me and the water tank. The computer screen watches it all day with an unblinking eye, even as I float letters on its cornea. The Pacific Ocean runs a line through the tree and the back of my head, extending its blueness to the cover of the Physicians' Desk Reference, the vase in Phaethon's watercolor and the B of the Milton Bradley MB logo on the Scrabble box. . . . On the ocean, whitecaps come and go, like uncertain stars. . . .

At sunset, as daylight fades, the mango tree looks like broccoli. I see through it, here and there, to clouds afloat on the ocean, still bright. The whitecaps have lifted up to the invisible Milky Way, to descend with nightfall as steady twinkling . . . ancient light streaming from honest, long-dead stars.

The nadis must be "cleansed," so cleanse them: an imperative of the core praxis of Siddha Yoga. Yogis discover what this means in the very process itself, in the kriyas of their sadhanas. I vouch for this. Phenomenologically, it literally "makes sense." Real therapeutics, self-healing, the opening of the organism: simply perineal, intestinal, cardio-pulmonary, spinal fortitude. Skeletal screaming.

Thomas Nagel's critique of Daniel Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* is reminiscent of Ken Wilber's treatment of such reductionism. In terms of the simplest of the hierarchical schemes that Wilber presents — the spiritual/mental/physical triad — the reductionist view is seen as the mental addressing the mental not within its own hermeneutic circle, but by reducing it to the physical and considering only data that a third person could view objectively. Nagel points out that the sort of objectivity demanded by physical data is not the only one, and that "for mental data . . . we need to use objective standards that combine the first- and third-person points of view, as they are in fact combined in the ordinary concepts for attribution of conscious states that we use to correct experiential descriptions by ourselves and others. A theory of



consciousness that doesn't include mental events among the data is like a book about Picasso that doesn't mention his paintings."

Wilber says that Zen masters are able to accurately attribute a mystical state of consciousness to Zen students whose responses in interviews with the masters indicate that the students have experienced that state. Wilber says that Zen masters are highly trained observers of the experiential phenomena of their own minds and of phenomena reported by others as having been experienced by them. He regards the masters as a community of observers whose evaluations of the data in their realm of expertise form a consensus, or would if put to the test. Thus he sees them as observers who share objective standards, as physical scientists do in their fields of study.

"The ordinary concepts for attribution of conscious states that we all employ without difficulty" are also the result of a long, highly specific training, one that we all undergo: learning our mother tongue. That is our initiation into the hermeneutic circle, within which there are many sub-circles, including the ring of Zen, with its masters and students. The circles intersect and proliferate, endlessly.

Wilber's aim in attempting to demonstrate the existence of an objective forum for mystical experience is to legitimize the mystical enterprise in the eyes of those who prize objectivity so highly — the likes of scientists, from whose ranks he rose into the subtle ethers of consciousness, and whose systematic analyses and syntheses he values in their proper sphere, i.e., the mental addressing the physical. Wilber would have us believe that he teleologically delineates the structure underlying a psychospiritual ladder that mankind, whether it knows it or not, ascends towards the ineffable One. He draws diagrams as neat as molecular models, but I think that we need to take his prefatory warnings and disclaimers seriously as to the tentativeness of his system and, especially, the fact that it does not successfully cross all ethnic boundaries. The latter consideration is a refutation of his scheme's universality; this strikes to the heart of his effort, but perhaps the explanatory power and breadth of the system as he has developed it so far has encouraged him in the belief that he can extend it to cover all the cases. I suspect that an element of pride contributes to the momentum of his systematizing. Perhaps his overdue Self, System and Structure will never appear, due, possibly, to his having understood that "the will to a system is a lack of integrity" (Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*). Or maybe he took a hint from Kurt Gödel's system-shattering results in logic. Or maybe he woke up to realities of religion as practiced in forums of objective observers, in ecclesiastical institutions from Kyoto to the Vatican to Boulder.

Ujjayi pranayama (see *Light on Yoga*) ushers in kriyas, energy, relaxation. Centering around the breath, everything that would have spoken out loud or in thought feels its

roots, its feet, grounded, floored. I take my stand; I do not take this sitting or lying down just now. I sat in the dark and looked at the light behind my dreams and memories; I listened to my ears ring. I sat my butt on a cushion and did this last night. Now, this evening, I look at nothing more, or at lavender clouds on the ocean. I sway as I listen to my breath. From the roots, I twist and untwist. The tip of my tongue touches the grape, the royal tooth, the nipple: the uvula. Ujjayi: the only pranayama okayed for anywhere, any time. It may be the Siddha mantra so'ham; it may be Maharajji's word. It may be surprising. It may be the radio, between stations — it may be the vocal equivalent of "light," the plain light of the visual slate wiped clean, like the ears hearing themselves. Loud explosions in the fifth chakra may bend open a monstrous petal of the dense lotus; the wheel may turn and rumble, removing debris from the tunnel that widens with each explosion. In the calm of ujjayi we pass through the tunnel, with no other sound for what the body does.

To the Watertank Think Tank I say: Thanks, but no, tanks. Ude, undisentanglement, is a big word, with a little abbreviation, for "knot." Using its homonymously indicated intersubjective sense, the tanks say in various ways that ude see a fathomless tangle of the threads of everyone's lives if only ude attain the proper perspective; ude feel the fabric of being becoming what ude always been, from bones to breath; thinking along these lines, ude hear emergent thoughts as the sound of snowflakes melting into silence, each with a unique sound, trillions at once, as new flakes crystallize in an ongoing rush of sounds, coming and going in the cycles of water that are a tiny part of the knot that is nature, the knot itself, itself hearing, as ude hear, these thoughts melt.

The tanks regard as absurd any attempt to unravel the knot: the would-be unraveler is part of the knot. Thus they dispose of "disentanglement," by which they mean explanations that pretend to objectivity — and explanations that don't make such a pretense but which would "simply explain" "something," these being terms of deception to the tanks who'd know naught but their infinitely complex knot, which, they are careful to point out, is no "thing."

In calling for ude, the tanks ask us to enjoy being this unknowable knot. That's a good idea, but ude can be a buzzword whose drone drowns out the scintillating sounds of snowflakes melting.

One day in Del Mar in the fall of '73, shortly before the momentous though momentary opening of my sahasrara, I called the Self-Realization Fellowship ashram ten or so miles up the road in Encinitas. I told Brother Premamoy I was interested in becoming a brother, a monk. He asked me why I thought I wanted to be a monk. I said I thought I'd like the lifestyle. He asked me how long I did the hong-sau technique (SRF's name

for ujjayi pranayama) at a stretch. Fifteen minutes, I told him, which is the suggested length for practicing this “concentration” technique when sitting prior to practicing the “meditation” technique of Om (which is essentially what Maharaji calls “music,” hong-sau being virtually the same as his “word” and “light” techniques combined). He asked if I’d ever smoked marijuana. When I said Yes, he dismissed me with the comment that it takes years to eliminate the toxins of marijuana from the brain.

That upset me. Being dismissed and being condemned to years of living with an impure mental instrument — a mirror of consciousness sullied with a tenacious goo that rendered it incapable of clear spiritual perceptions — made me determined to prove him wrong: I pressed forward with all my energies to achieve the definitive, doubt-removing spiritual experience I’d sought for so long. Soon my toxic fragments coalesced and “I” “died.” I revived, blissful and proud. I erected a mental monument to my self-realization atop the grave of my doubt. My attainment, my “state,” was to become haunted statuary.

Hong-sau may be practiced any time, Yogananda tells us, even while eating. And especially, I might add, while wheezing, to which ujjayi bears a resemblance I noted last night after hours of off-and-almost-always-on ujjayi during which time I ate while hearing my breathing and chewing, for a change, through my Eustachian tubes which had opened with the action of my jawbone. After my meal of a sandwich of cream cheese and mustard on toast, and tortilla chips, the ujjayi coarsened to a wheeze. I was amused as I observed this new occurrence for a few moments, then I relaxed into my body, feeling my torso and spine; my head snapped back, I felt and heard a pop in my neck, and the wheezing was gone: ujjayi washed on, like waves on the shore.

I reproduce here the penultimate stanza of “Jyota Se Jyota” from Sri Guru Gita (Gurudev Siddha Peeth, Ganeshpuri, fourth edition, 1978), p. 69:

Saci jyota jage hrdaya men (2x)

So’ham nada jagavo

Sadguru jyota se jyota jagavo

(Refrain)

The true flame is alive in our hearts.

Awaken us to the So'ham-music.

And from the preceding page:

Refrain :

Jyota se jyota jagavo

Sadguru jyota se jyota jagavo

Mera antara timira mitavo

Sadguru jyota se jyota jagavo

Light my lamp from thy lamp, O Sadguru,

Light my lamp from thy lamp,

Remove the darkness covering my heart.

After reading, hearing and singing about hong-sau/Word/so'ham for so many years I'm beginning to appreciate the basic technique that is as advertised: simple and natural. It seemed forced, not simple, until I accepted the naturalness, the OKness, of the stuff that it brought up: grimacing, contorting, grunting, shaking, screeching — ugly physico-emotional kriyas. Allowing myself this, I'm beginning to spontaneously hear so'ham: ujjayi is doing itself. This, I suppose, is what's called ajapa-japa. I'm in a position of having to confess that Siddha Yoga at some point or points does become a spontaneous yoga. It's blissful, it's freeing. I'm tasting the bliss of freedom, muktananda, and I appreciate Swami Muktananda in a new light, in the light, if you



will, of the flame of the lamp of my heart. Can I sincerely chant the last stanza of “Jyota Se Jyota”?

Jivana Muktananda avinashi (2x)

Caranana sarana lagavo

Sadguru jyota se jyota jagavo

(Refrain)

O imperishable Muktananda!

Let our lives be dedicated to thy feet.

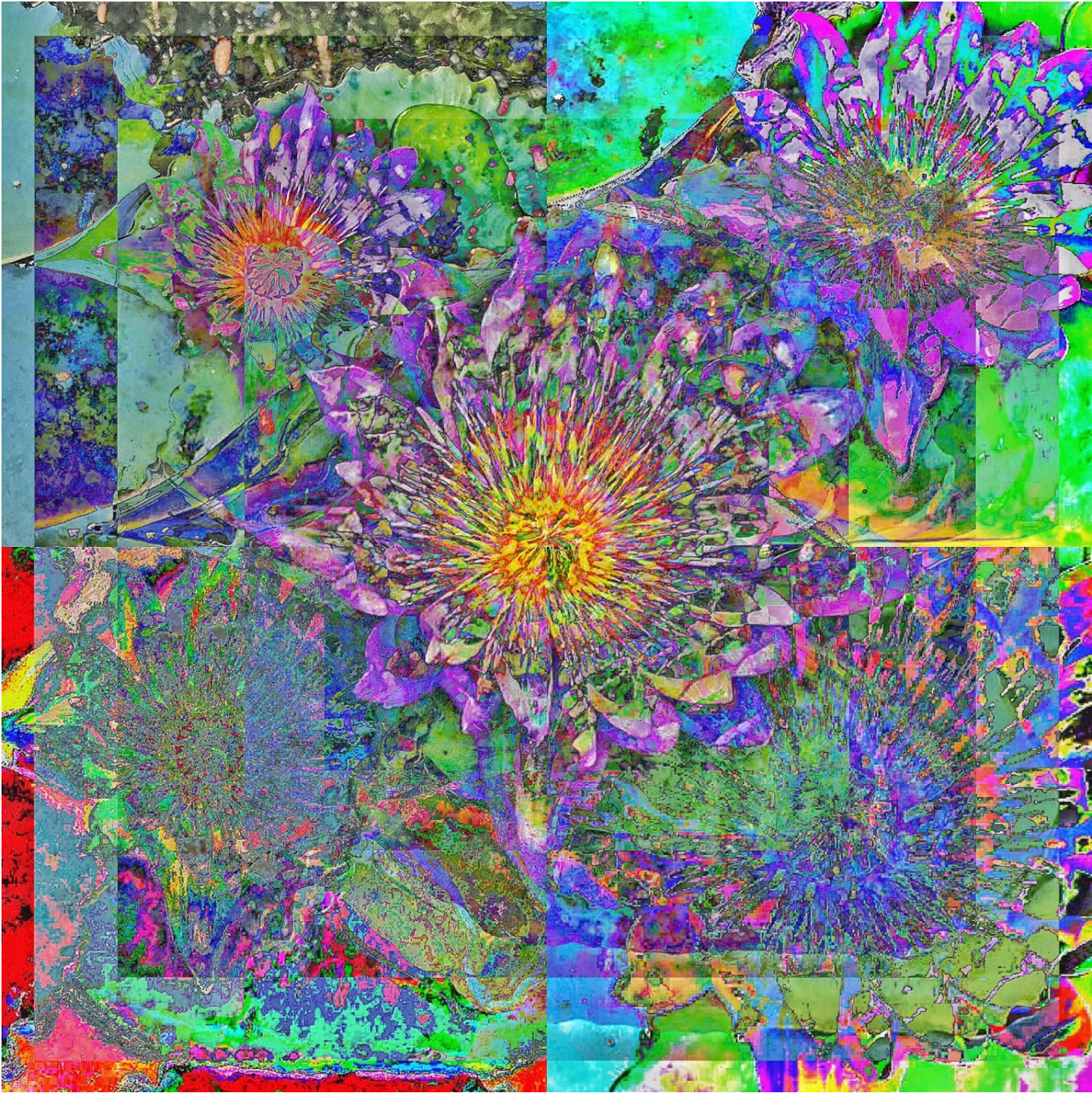
Yes, given: the status of the guru’s feet as a recognized mystery of Siddha Yoga; the notion that these “feet” (surely not the feet of the dead Baba buried in Ganeshpuri with the rest of his body) encompass the totality of existence; the nature of Muktananda as the muktananda, the blissful freedom, of anyone fortunate enough to hear about it and experience it due to the dedicated efforts of people like Baba and myself. What, then, is such a fortunate one’s due? His due will be his pleasure, which is communicating the source of his pleasure. The communicating — the saying — and the source are the same: the breath, whose inhalation and exhalation are sometimes called the feet of the (here I restore the honorific upper-case G) Guru. “I salute Sri Guru, whose two lotus feet remove the pain of duality and who always protects one from calamities. I salute the Guru’s two feet, which are within the reach of speech, thought, and contemplation, and which have different lusters — white and red — representing Shiva and Shakti.” (Guru Gita 43, 45) If I consider that Shiva = jiva (soul), the imperishability (from jivana) of the soul of muktananda is no problem. I recall Kshama — Vidura’s wife and editor-in-chief of Darshan magazine — saying that Gurumayi kidded her about not believing in reincarnation; it seems it was no big deal.

Do people want to be kids of a physically childless Guru who kids? Are we kidding when we chant the second verse of “Jyota Se Jyota,” which means: “We, thy children,

have come to thy door. Show thy auspicious form.”? Yes and No, respectively. This is the desire for and the acknowledgement of a transference. As we once, in our infancy, worshiped our parents, “We worship thee, bowing our heads low. Shower the nectar of thy love.” (Third verse) We worship the object of our transference, or at least obsess about her, lowering our heads into our infantile stuff. When we taste the love we know it’s all right to let it all out, even though “It has been sleeping within us for ages — Awaken that Chitshakti.” (Fourth verse) Let Chitshakti’s kriyas heal us. That brings us to the flaming heart and the So’ham-music-awakening, which leaves only the first verse unconsidered: “O Lord of Yoga, O Lord of Knowledge, O Lord of all, O Supreme Master! Shower thy grace.” That’s a good thing for the aspiring children of a Yoga Master, of a Guru, to call out on her doorstep.

I’ve come full circle, spiraling all the way back to Yogananda, Maharaji, Baba and Gurumayi — and even back to Rajneesh, who gave me a name I’ve thought of several times today: Prem Avadipa, which he told me means Bursting Out in a Flame of Love.







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## Chapter 3 Haikundalini: A Few Haiku

### **Haikundalini**

The base of the spine  
includes the pelvis, legs, feet,  
Earth and universe

### **Ujjayi Breathing**

The ocean whispers,  
beckoning ego inward  
upon waves of bliss

### **Om Namah Shivaya**

Mantra is Guru,  
his tantras weaving through you.  
Smile like Buddhas do!

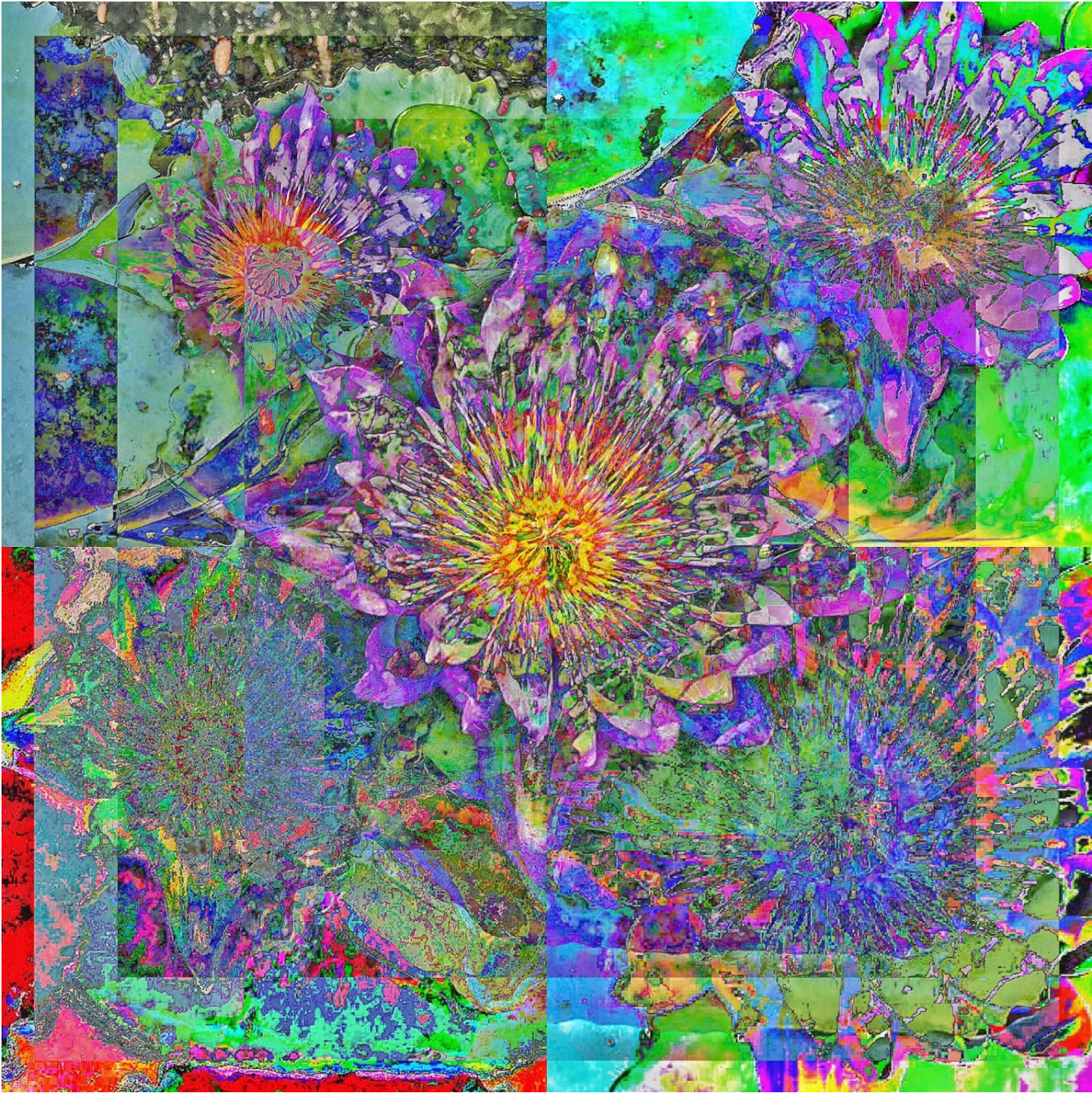
### **Khechari Mudra**

The tip of the tongue  
floats up past the uvula  
to Moon, Sun and stars

### **Bliss of Freedom**

Muktananda said,  
“God dwells within you as you.”  
You’re not what you think!







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## Chapter 4 Enjoying Everything: All-Inclusive Love

### Enjoying the Thing of Everything

Anything is many things. It's a whole and its various constituent parts and particles, interweaving fields and forces, designating names and sustaining circumstances, its essences and its characteristics — and likewise each of these things is many things as well, and so on infinitely. Everything altogether as a single thing including each and every thing is what I call the Thing of Everything. In my usage of the word thing there is nothing whatsoever that is not a thing. If there's a word for it, or not, if it's real, or not, it's a thing. Nothing, no-thing, and nothingness are things, and so are you and I. We're all in this together, each an infinity of things embraced by the Thing of Everything.

And that's a good thing. Our beneficially participating in things greater than ourselves leads to a growing awareness of our interconnectedness and an expanding feeling of joy as we more and more deeply sense our kinship with all things. As we extend goodwill toward all, all increasingly reveal themselves to be kaleidoscopic, playful aspects of an infinitely lively Thing of Everything. That's quite Something.

### The Thing of Everything

Anything is many things\*.

Each and every thing — everything — is something else, so nothing is anything exclusively.

Including everything is the Thing of Everything.

\* The scope of “things” is all-inclusive, including all words and all meanings, all thoughts and all theories, from philosophy to physics, from politics to spirituality.

Watch thoughts passing by like clouds in the sky  
Easily breathing, you don't have to try  
Feel any pain and just let it be  
Release all your notions, even your “me”

## **A universe from nothing?**

That “nothing” is quite Something!

What part of “nothing” don’t you understand? Hint: the “nothing” of physicists from which everything came is a nothing “with special sauce” — the “sauce” being the potential for everything to emerge from it. Pretty pregnant “nothing” :)

Nothing is as it seems but everything else isn’t.

## **“Abductees”**

I’d say that since we don’t truly, deeply, thoroughly know what anything is, everything is an unidentified “flying” object, including every thought that passes through our minds. However confident we may be in identifying anything, the assigned identity is incomplete, provisional and ultimately illusory. Thus “reality” is likened to a dream, clouds in the sky, mist, a mirage, a magic show, a dance, a play, et cetera. We’re all observers of the passing show — and as a captive audience of the play, we are all abductees.

## **A Most Essential Something**

“A man may in this life reach the point at which he understands himself to be one with that which is nothing compared with all things that one can imagine or express in words. By common agreement, men call this Nothing, ‘God,’ and it is itself a most essential Something.”

— Henry Suso, quoted in *The Spiritual Ascent*, “The Void,” pg. 727

## **Expanding**

Q: “I think that I misunderstood this ‘there is no self’ stuff. I was visualizing an entity that is not defined and kind of disappears in the background or in the whole. But now I think that the self actually has to be a highly developed entity with a deep understanding of its true nature and relationships and be possessed of wisdom, purpose and determination and capable of action. What do you think?” — Alex

A: Your view of the self makes sense to me. I think our selves and their accompanying self-views keep expanding, growing in wisdom and compassion/love, and as they enlarge and become deeper and more encompassing they make our former, pettier versions of ourselves seem small and temporary — just passing stages that eventually may come to seem illusory. As ever-changing “illusions” they are in a sense unreal, and insofar as at least some aspects of selves are non-eternal some philosophers therefore call them non-existent, which is a bit radical when applied to the “whole self” and easily misleading because obviously we and they have thoughts and experiences: lives, in a word, and life exists. But we may live better and “bigger” — so much so that our former selves seem like abandoned cocoons viewed by soaring butterflies — active, purposeful and determined butterflies!

### **All-Inclusive Love**

We begin with a nonexclusive definition of “thing”: A thing is anything whatsoever (including that which normally is not considered to be a thing, such as a person or process).

We call the thing that includes everything the Thing of Everything. When the many things are recognized as aspects of the one Thing, we may relax into the awareness that we, too, through and through, are not apart from That. That’s simplicity itself. It’s simply lovable, and we ourselves are Love.

“How so? It doesn’t seem that way to me,” you might think. The seeming is not the reality, but in our dreaming this seeming reality we can practice loving by acts of kindness and generosity. A sweet smile is a kind gift that benefits both giver and recipient, giving both a taste of love. As our little tastes of love grow from now and then, here and there, to more and more here and now, moment to moment, we come to find ourselves bathing in ambrosial Love.

“Love is the only language that every living being can understand. It is universal,” says Amma, the “hugging saint.” Here’s her simple, relaxing Ma Om Meditation: <http://www.tomyeshe.com/#!ammas-ma-om-meditation/ck59>



## **Mini-Glossary of some things**

**anything** some thing among all

**nothing** ultimately, as Nothingness, a conceptual self-contradiction: complete absence is nowhere present thus “nothing” is merely a word with associated ideas — it is many things

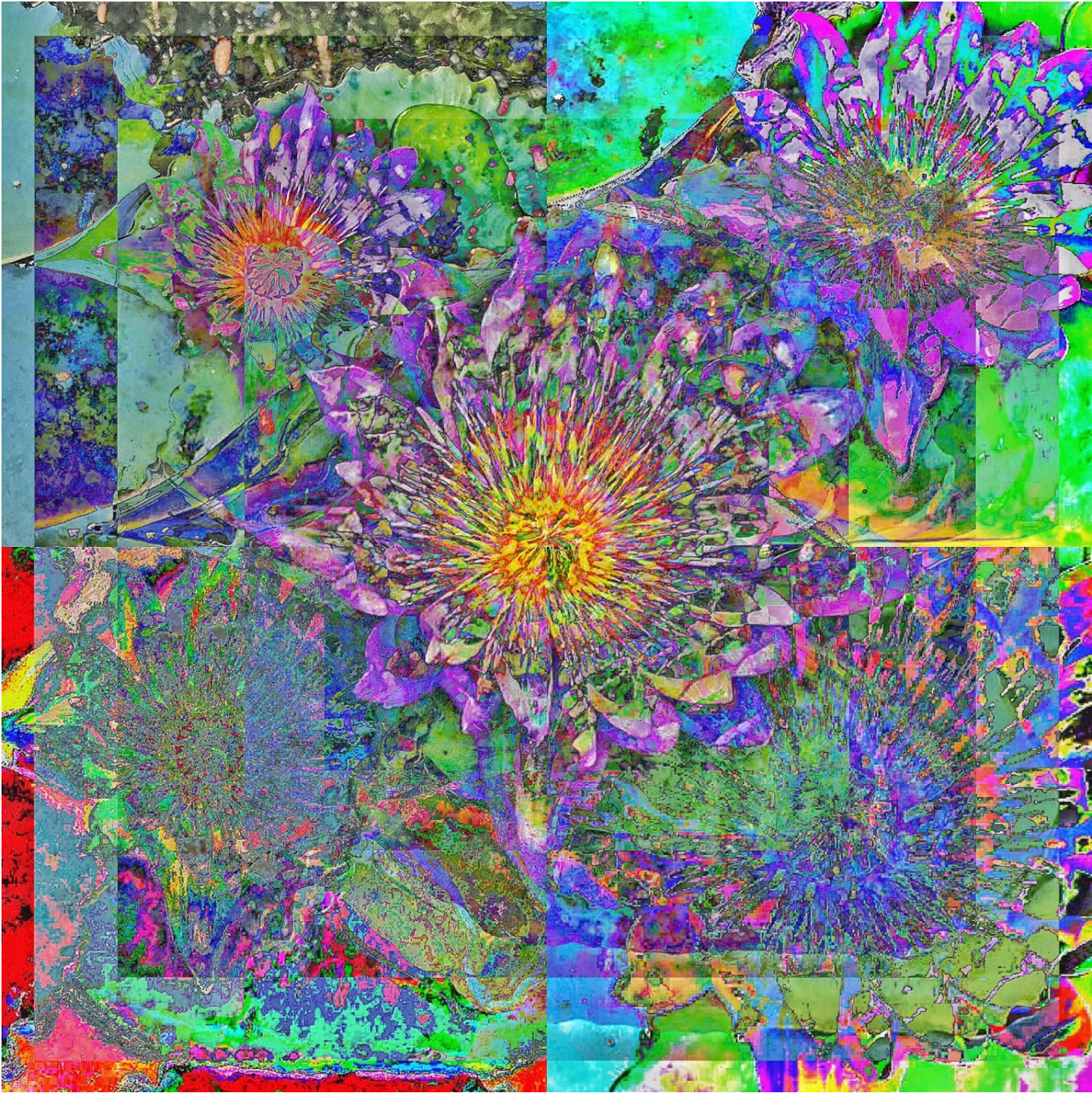
**something** a thing

**Something** (capitalized) the Thing of Everything

**thing** anything whatsoever

**Thing of Everything** the thing that includes everything; everything altogether as a single thing including each and every thing







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## Glossary

### Ajna chakra

“Ajna (Sanskrit: अज्ञा, IAST: Ajna, English: ‘command’), or third-eye Chakra, is the sixth primary Chakra, or energy point in the body, according to Hindu tradition.”

— Wikipedia; more: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajna>

### Amma

“My religion is Love.” — Amma (Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, born 1953)

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Many people wonder how a little girl from a simple South Indian village came to be known throughout the world as “Amma, the Mother of All.” Motherhood, in its ultimate sense, has nothing to do with bearing a child, but with love, compassion and selflessness. It lies in totally giving one’s self to others.

If we look at Amma’s life, this is what we see—someone who has offered her every thought, word and deed for the benefit of others. Giving is the essence. It’s just that when the homeless come crying for shelter and Amma gives them a house, we call her a “humanitarian.” And when the sorrowful come crying for emotional solace and she gives them love, we call her a “mother.” And when those thirsty for spiritual knowledge come earnestly seeking and she gives them wisdom, we call her a “guru.” This attitude of selflessly serving all creation, knowing others to be extensions of one’s own self, Amma refers to as vishwa matrutvam—universal motherhood. And it is to this pinnacle of human existence that Amma is trying to awaken the world through her life, teachings and darshan [divine embrace].

Questions about the nature of the soul, the universe and God; about dharma, love and family life; about meditation and other spiritual practices.... Amma has been clearing the doubts of sincere seekers on such subtle subjects since her youth. She never had a guru nor studied the Vedas, yet she speaks on the truths expressed within the scriptures with wisdom, clarity and true insight. Hers is not an academic knowledge,

but the knowledge of one who is ever-established in the Ultimate Reality. It is for this reason that Amma’s simple childhood home has become the spiritual home to thousands—an ashram where aspirants from around the world reside in order to imbibe Amma’s wisdom and realize the Truth that is their real nature.

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— Amma’s website; more: <http://www.amritapuri.org/amma>

## **Anything**

some thing among all

## **Guru**

“Guru (Sanskrit: गुरु. IAST: guru) is a Sanskrit term that connotes someone who is a ‘teacher, guide or master’ of certain knowledge. In pan-Indian traditions, guru is someone more than a teacher, traditionally a reverential figure to the student, with the guru serving as a ‘counselor, who helps mold values, shares experiential knowledge as much as literal knowledge, an exemplar in life, an inspirational source and who helps in the spiritual evolution of a student.’ The term also refers to someone who primarily is one's spiritual guide, who helps one to discover the same potentialities that the guru has already realized.”

— Wikipedia; more: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guru>

## **Kundalini**

“Kundalini (Sanskrit: कुण्डलिनी, IAST: kuṇḍalinī, English: ‘coiled one’), in yogic theory, is a primal energy, or shakti, located at the base of the spine. Different spiritual traditions teach methods of ‘awakening’ kundalini for the purpose of reaching spiritual enlightenment. Kundalini is described as lying ‘coiled’ at the base of the spine, represented as either a goddess or sleeping serpent waiting to be awakened. In modern commentaries, Kundalini has been called an unconscious, instinctive or libidinal force, or ‘mother energy or intelligence of complete maturation.’

“Kundalini awakening is said to result in deep meditation, enlightenment and bliss. This awakening involves the Kundalini physically moving up the central channel to reach within the Sahasrara Chakra at the top of the head. Many systems of yoga focus on the awakening of Kundalini through meditation, pranayama breathing, the practice of asana and chanting of mantras. In physical terms, one commonly reports the Kundalini experience to be a feeling of electric current running along the spine.”

— Wikipedia; more: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kundalini>

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“Paramahansa Yogananda states:

‘The yogi reverses the searchlights of intelligence, mind and life force inward through a secret astral passage, the coiled way of the kundalini in the coccygeal plexus, and upward through the sacral, the lumbar, and the higher dorsal, cervical, and medullary plexuses, and the spiritual eye at the point between the eyebrows, to reveal finally the soul's presence in the highest center (sahasrara) in the brain.’ — Paramahansa Yogananda, *God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*, Los Angeles, CA: Self-Realization Fellowship, pp. 18 & 1093” — Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kundalini>

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## Nothing

ultimately, as Nothingness, a conceptual self-contradiction: complete absence is nowhere present thus “nothing” is merely a word with associated ideas — it is many things

## Om

“Om (Sanskrit: ॐ, IAST: Auṃ or Oṃ) is a sacred sound and a spiritual icon in Indian religions. It is also a mantra in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. In Hinduism, Om is one of the most important spiritual symbols. It refers to Atman (soul, self within) and Brahman (ultimate reality, entirety of the universe, truth, divine, supreme spirit, cosmic principles, knowledge).”

— Wikipedia; more: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Om>

## Om Namah Shivaya

“Om Namah Shivaya (Sanskrit: ॐ नमः शिवाय; IAST: ॐ Namaḥ Śivāya) is one of the most popular Hindu mantras and the most important mantra in Shaivism.

“Its translation is ‘adoration (namas) to Śiva,’ preceded by the mystical syllable ‘Om.’ Om Namah Shivaya mantra is sung by devotees in prayers and recited by yogis in meditation. It is associated with qualities of prayer, divine-love, grace, truth and blissfulness.

“Traditionally, it is accepted to be a powerful healing mantra beneficial for all physical and mental ailments. Soulful recitation of this mantra brings peace to the heart and joy to the Ātman or Soul. Sages consider that the recitation of these syllables is sound therapy for the body and nectar for the soul (Ātman). The nature of the mantra is the calling upon the higher self; it is the calling upon Shiva, the destroyer deity, to aid in the death (destruction of ego) and rebirth achieved during meditation. This goes generally for mantras and chants to different gods, which are different aspects of the higher self.”

— Wikipedia; more: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Om\\_Namah\\_Shivaya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Om_Namah_Shivaya)

## Sahasrara chakra

“Sahasrara (Sanskrit: सहस्रार, IAST: Sahasrāra, English: ‘thousand-petaled’) or crown chakra is generally considered the seventh primary chakra, according to most tantric yoga traditions.”

— Wikipedia; more: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahasrara>

## Self-Realization Fellowship

The organization founded by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1920. He defined Self-realization as “the knowing — in body, mind, and soul — that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God’s omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing.” — SRF website: <http://www.yogananda-srf.org>

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### Aims and Ideals

- To disseminate among the nations a knowledge of definite scientific techniques for attaining direct personal experience of God.
- To teach that the purpose of life is the evolution, through self-effort, of man’s limited mortal consciousness into God Consciousness; and to this end to establish Self-Realization Fellowship temples for God-communion throughout the world, and to encourage the establishment of individual temples of God in the homes and in the hearts of men.
- To reveal the complete harmony and basic oneness of original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ and original Yoga as taught by Bhagavan Krishna; and to show that these principles of truth are the common scientific foundation of all true religions.
- To point out the one divine highway to which all paths of true religious beliefs eventually lead: the highway of daily, scientific, devotional meditation on God.
- To liberate man from his threefold suffering: physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual ignorance.

- To encourage “plain living and high thinking”; and to spread a spirit of brotherhood among all peoples by teaching the eternal basis of their unity: kinship with God.
- To demonstrate the superiority of mind over body, of soul over mind.
- To overcome evil by good, sorrow by joy, cruelty by kindness, ignorance by wisdom.
- To unite science and religion through realization of the unity of their underlying principles.
- To advocate cultural and spiritual understanding between East and West, and the exchange of their finest distinctive features.
- To serve mankind as one’s larger Self.

#### Temples, retreats, and other facilities of Self-Realization Fellowship

Self-Realization Fellowship has over 500 temples, retreats, ashrams, centers, and meditation circles around the world. In the U.S., there are seven temples in California: Berkeley, Glendale, Hollywood, Fullerton, Encinitas, Pacific Palisades, and San Diego. In Arizona there is a temple in Phoenix. Retreat centers are located in Pacific Palisades, CA (Lake Shrine), Encinitas, CA, Valley Center, CA (Hidden Valley Ashram, for men only), Greenfield, VA (Front Royal). In Europe, there is a retreat center in Bermersbach, Germany. There is also a retreat in Armação, Brazil. There are meditation centers and circles located in 54 countries. SRF also has a sister organization in India called Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, founded by Yogananda in 1917, and headquartered in Dakshineswar (near Calcutta). YSS oversees 180 kendras, mandalis, retreats, and ashrams throughout India and Nepal, including meditation centers, 21 educational institutions, and a variety of charitable facilities.

Encinitas. After his return from India in 1936, Paramahansa Yogananda took up residence at the SRF hermitage in Encinitas, California which was a surprise gift from his disciple Rajarsi Janakananda. It was while at this hermitage that Yogananda wrote his famous Autobiography of a Yogi and other writings plus creating an “enduring foundation for the spiritual and humanitarian work of Self-Realization Fellowship/ Yogoda Satsanga Society of India.” This property now includes an ashram and a retreat center. A main temple and an overflow temple are nearby on Second St.

Hollywood. In 1942 Yogananda formally opened the SRF Hollywood Temple on Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, California which is the oldest SRF temple in America.

Pacific Palisades. The Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine lies a few blocks from the Pacific Ocean, on Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades, California. It was dedicated by Yogananda, on 20 August 1950. The site has lush gardens, a large, natural spring-fed lake which is framed by natural hillsides, and is home to a variety of flora and fauna, including swans, ducks, koi, water turtles, and lotus flowers. The entire property is a natural amphitheater. Many thousands of visitors come each year to enjoy the scenic beauty and serenity of this spiritual sanctuary. One noticeable landmark, visible from all parts of the grounds, is the huge golden lotus archway, painted white topped with enormous gold lotus blossoms. The archway frames the Mahatma Gandhi World Peace Memorial, an outdoor shrine where an authentic 1,000-year-old Chinese stone sarcophagus holds a portion of the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi himself.

Twentynine Palms. Yogananda spent most of the last four years of his life in seclusion at his desert ashram in Twentynine Palms, California with some of his inner circle of disciples. There he completed his legacy of writings, including the revisions of his books, articles and lessons written previously.

— Wikipedia; more: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-Realization\\_Fellowship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-Realization_Fellowship)

## **Siddha Yoga**

“Siddha Yoga is a spiritual path founded by Muktananda (1908–1982). The present spiritual head of the Siddha Yoga path is Gurumayi Chidvilasananda.

“A fundamental characteristic of the Siddha Yoga path is shaktipat-diksha, literally translated as ‘initiation by descent of divine power,’ through which a seeker’s Kundalini Shakti is awakened by the Guru. Once active, this inner power is said to support the seeker’s steady efforts to attain self-realization.

“Ashrams and meditation centers provide places to learn and practice Siddha Yoga. The two main ashrams are: Gurudev Siddha Peeth in Ganeshpuri, India, and Shree Muktananda Ashram in upstate New York. There are meditation centers in a number of countries, including India, the United States, Australia, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Japan.”

— Wikipedia; more: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siddha\\_Yoga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siddha_Yoga)



## **Something**

a thing

Something (capitalized)

the Thing of Everything

## **Thing**

anything whatsoever

## **Thing of Everything**

the thing that includes everything; everything altogether as a single thing including each and every thing

## **Ujjayi**

A breathing technique in which a subtle whooshing sound is created by slightly constricting the throat — the glottis, specifically — on both inhalation and exhalation.

## **Yogananda**

Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952) founded Self-Realization Fellowship in 1920 and wrote the classic Autobiography of a Yogi, originally published in 1946.

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“The experience of meeting Paramahansa Yogananda is etched in my memory as one of the unforgettable events of my life.... As I looked into his face, my eyes were almost dazzled by a radiance — a light of spirituality that literally shone from him. His infinite gentleness, his gracious kindness, enveloped me like warm sunshine.... I could see that his understanding and insight extended to the most mundane of problems, even

though he was a man of Spirit. In him I found a true ambassador of India, carrying and spreading the essence of India's ancient wisdom to the world."

— Dr. Binay R. Sen, former Ambassador of India to the United States

To those who were personally acquainted with Paramahansa Yogananda, his own life and being were convincing testimony to the power and authenticity of the ancient wisdom he presented to the world. Countless readers of his autobiography have attested to the presence in its pages of that same light of spiritual authority that radiated from his person. Hailed as a masterpiece when it first appeared in print more than sixty years ago, the book sets forth not only the story of a life of unmistakable greatness but a fascinating introduction to the spiritual thought of the East — especially its unique science of direct personal communion with God — opening up to the Western public a realm of knowledge hitherto accessible only to a few.

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— Self-Realization Fellowship website: <http://www.yogananda-srf.org>

